

COMMISSION ON AGING  
MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES  
May 25, 2017

<b>Members Present</b>	<b>Members Absent</b>
Noelle Heyman	John Honig
Syed Yusuf	Neal Brown
Phyllis Rand	Rashid Makhdoom
Shenita Freeman	Karen Maricheau
Revathi Vikram	Judith Peres
Barbara Brubeck	
Mary Petrizzo	<b>Alumni</b>
Amoke Alakoye	Charles Kauffman
Richard Jourdenais	
Mort Faller	<b>Liaison</b>
Hileia Seeger	Phil Smakula, Department of Recreation
Jack Sprague	Faisal Khan, Department of Transportation
Jerry Moreoff	Jim Campbell, Commission on Veterans Affair
Alan Kaplan	
Nanine Meiklejohn	<b>Guests</b>
Hilery Tumba	Isiah Leggett, County Executive
Isabelle Schoenfeld	Amy Gotwals, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)
Monica Schaeffer	Gabriel Albornoz, Department of Recreation
Sue Guenther	
David Denton	<b>Staff</b>
Stephanie Edelstein	John J. Kenney, Department of Health & Human Services
	Odile Brunetto, Department of Health & Human Services
	Tremayne Jones, Department of Health & Human Services
	Pazit Aviv, Department of Health & Human Services

Call to order–Chair, Noelle Heyman called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

**Welcome and Introductions**–Noelle welcomed all attendees. Staff and guests introduced themselves.

**Action**–The April 27<sup>th</sup> full Commission meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

**Treasurer’s Report**–Treasurer Revathi Vikram reported that the COA account balance is \$ 6,130.82.

Isiah Leggett, County Executive thanked the Commission on their outstanding work. Mr. Leggett addressed the audience about events in Montgomery County. On May 24<sup>th</sup> Mr. Leggett attended Senior Planet Montgomery graduation that was held at Long Branch Community Center. In 2016, ultraMontgomery and the Montgomery County Department of Technology Services partnered with Older Adults Technology Services(OATS) to create the Senior Planet Montgomery program. Senior Planet Montgomery works with local libraries and community centers to offer a comfortable and engaging place where adults 60–plus can learn, work and explore new ways to thrive in today’s digital world. They offer a range of free 5-week 10-week technology training courses, as well as tech-focused events, workshops and lectures. All the courses and events are free. To find out more about Senior Planet contact Senior Planet Montgomery at 240-753-0676, or by email at [mocoinfo@seniorplanet.org](mailto:mocoinfo@seniorplanet.org) you can also visit their website at: <https://seniorplanet.org/>.

Mr. Leggett informed the audience about affordable senior housing at Mount Jezreel. On April 28<sup>th</sup> Mr. Leggett joined developers and church leaders to break ground for an affordable housing residence in Silver Spring for tenants age 62 and older. Mount Jezreel Senior Housing is a \$20 million new construction development of a 3-story L-shaped apartment building surrounded by mature trees and convenient to transit service. The project is a partnership among Mount Jezreel Community Development Corporation, Mission First Housing Group, and the Henson Development Company. The new apartments will be located on Glouster Knoll Drive, just east of the existing Mount Jezreel Baptist Church and Mount Jezreel Christian School in Silver Spring. The project represents a continuing effort by County leaders to maintain and build affordable housing for seniors. A recent survey of seniors in Montgomery County revealed that housing costs are a top concern. Many are faced with relocating to more affordable locations far away from their support networks. The estimated median income for renters age 62+ in Montgomery

County is \$34,000, far below the County average of \$92,000. Mount Jezreel Senior Housing will provide 75 mixed-income apartments for active seniors seeking independent living. Four units will be rented to those with incomes less than 30 percent of area median income (AMI); five will be rented to those with income between 31 percent and 40 percent AMI; eleven will be rented to those with income between 41 percent and 50 percent AMI; and, 47 units will be rented to those with income between 51 percent and 60 percent AMI. As part of the total 67 affordable units, the developer intends to make 12 units available to senior veterans with incomes between 30 percent and 60 percent of AMI. Eight units at the property will be rented at market rate. Apartments are expected to become available in late spring of 2018. For more information about the Mount Jezreel Senior Housing Project, contact Mission First Housing Group at (202) 223-9785 or visit [www.missionfirsthousing.org](http://www.missionfirsthousing.org). Those interested in joining the wait list to live at Mount Jezreel Senior Housing can visit [www.columbuspm.org](http://www.columbuspm.org)

Mr. Leggett stated that there is significant need for affordable housing and that the County needs to do more to address the challenging problem due to the continuing growing population of seniors. With this latest budget in his tenure the County has vested \$902 million for affordable housing and another billion dollars on top of that combined with all the affordable housing either constructed, maintained or acquired 59,000 affordable housing units in Montgomery County.

Mr. Leggett also reflected about a program that was launched last year called Design for Life (DFL). Design for Life is a project of the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services. It is a service to promote accessible home design to Montgomery County residents and building professionals. The Design for Life (DFL) Property Tax Incentive Program provides 3 tiers of property tax incentives to make homes more universally accessible:

1. **Accessible Feature tax incentives** are for certain features that are permanently installed to improve access to or within an owner's principal residence (not limited to single-family homes).
2. **Level I (VISITable) tax incentives** are available for permanent installations to any new or existing single-family homes, townhomes and duplexes that meet Level I accessibility threshold.

3. **Level II (LIVEable) tax incentives** are available for permanent installations to any new or existing single-family homes, townhomes and duplexes that meet Level II accessibility threshold. For more information about Design for Life visit their website at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/design/about.html>

Gabriel Albornoz, Director, Recreation Department provided an update on plans to build a full-service recreation senior center in downtown Silver Spring where the Elizabeth House now stands. The Elizabeth house will be demolished to make room for a new recreation center that will house an indoor aquatic facility, affordable housing and market rate housing. The new center will be double the size of North Potomac and it will have accessible public parking a half of block away from the facility. The Recreation Department will partner with Holy Cross Hospital to conduct a senior fit program at the facility. The project is now funded and is in the permit phase with Montgomery County Park and Planning with the hope of expediting the process. The expectation date for the groundbreaking is 2018 and it will take about 2 years to complete. The estimated cost of the building is \$38 million dollars. Gabe stated in the near future the plan is to build a recreation center in downtown Bethesda and to remodel Holiday Park Senior Center and Schweinhaut Senior Center as well.

**Federal Updates:** Amy Gotwals, Chief, Public Policy and External Affairs National Association Area Agencies on Aging(n4a) explained the role of n4a. N4a's primary mission is to build the capacity of its members—Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and Title VI Native American aging programs—to help older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible. The role that all Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) fulfill are:

- **Assess community needs and develop and fund programs** that respond to those needs;
- **Educate and provide direct assistance** to consumers about available community resources for long-term services and supports;
- **Serve as portals to care** by assessing multiple service needs, determining eligibility, authorizing or purchasing services and monitoring the appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of services; and
- **As custodians of the public interest**, demonstrate responsible fiscal stewardship by maximizing use of public and private funding to serve as many consumers as possible.

Amy discussed the federal budget with the audience. Amy stated that of all federal government spending 2/3 is already into law, unless Congress decides to change the law on how Medicaid, Medicare or Children's Health Insurance Program(CHIP) works, this is called mandatory spending. In United States fiscal policy, mandatory spending is government spending on certain programs that are required by existing law. Mandatory spending is currently estimated to be \$2.535 trillion for FY2018. The two largest mandatory programs are Social Security and Medicare. The president administration proposed an 18% decrease for HHS, one of the largest departments within the federal government.

Amy spoke about the Budget Control Act (BCA) which was enacted into law on August 2, 2011. The BCA set caps on discretionary spending for FY2012 through FY2021 and created the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction (often referred to as the Super Committee). The last successful budget that the Federal Government had was in 2010, most discretion programs were not restored that will help support aging in place. For more information on the budget please visit <https://www.hhs.gov/about/budget/fy2018/budget-in-brief/index.html#budget>.

**County HHS Updates:** Dr. John J. Kenney Chief, Aging and Disability Services addressed the COA on budget updates. Adult Protective Services (APS) had a record breaking month with 90 referrals the average is 70-80 referrals a month. Jay spoke about the 2,200 clients serviced through Community First Choice (CFC). CFC is a Medicaid program that was created by the Affordable Care Act (ACA) to make it easier for states to offer home-and community-based services to Medicaid beneficiaries. Jay informed the audience that Uma Ahluwalia, Director of Health and Human Services is the acting Health Officer and Chief of Public Health Services due to the untimely passing of Dr. Tillman on January 3<sup>rd</sup> of this year. As acting Health Officer Ms. Ahluwalia had a meeting with Deputy Directors of Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) to advocate about some of the problem of the Medicaid Waiver Program. One of the problems discussed is that the Federal Government does not pay for the expensive language translation services that is required, over 70% of the Community First Choice (CFC) clients in Montgomery County require language translations.

## **COMMISSION BUSINESS**

Summer Studies Presentation and Selection and Sign up—Noelle discussed the two proposed summer studies selected by Aging in Place Committee and Health and Wellness Committee.

Aging in Place and Community and Planning Committee (AIPCP) co-chairs Barbara Brubeck and Mary Petrizzo proposed their summer study titled “Preserving and Expanding Affordable Rental Housing for Seniors”. The summer study will focus on affordable as well as market rate rentals available for seniors in the county. It will take place in three sessions. The first will focus on expanding rental housing options for seniors, the second session will focus on preserving existing rental options and the third session will be dedicated to formulating recommendations based on the first two sessions.

Health Planning, Services & Community Supports Committee co-chair David Denton proposed their summer study titled “Implications of Repealing and Replacing the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The summer study will focus on how the current American Health Care Act (AHCA) bill would affect seniors.

Stakeholders Meeting Report—Noelle spoke briefly about the Stakeholders forum that was held on March 29th at the Silver Spring Civic Building. The County’s Commission on Aging is actively supporting the Age Friendly Montgomery effort and to that end convened a Stakeholders Forum to inform interested citizens of the Age Friendly Montgomery initiative and of progress to date on four of the domains, to obtain feedback from the participants and to develop recommendations for ongoing work in these four areas. More than 120 residents participated in the meeting bringing their interest, personal experience and/or expertise to the breakout session discussions. These sessions led to the identification of top issues and the following recommendations for each of the four domains: Housing, Transportation, Communications and Home and Community Based Services. To find out more information about the Stakeholders Forum please go to the Commission on Aging’s website at:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/ADS/COA/COAWhatsNew.html>

Committee Assignments—Noelle asked the new commissioners to sign up to participate on the subcommittees. Noelle stated that more participation is needed with the committees.

Business Cards/Name Tags—Dr. Brunetto explained that commissioners can purchase sturdy plastic name tags; she also indicated that commissioners can order business cards that the county will pay for, as it pertains to the Commission on Aging. A disclaimer will be signed by the commissioner and kept on file.

Facebook Page—Noelle is asking commissioners to coordinate with Tremayne to help with the Commission on Aging's Facebook page.

Meeting adjourned at noon.

Respectfully Submitted  
Hillary Tsumba, Secretary